Question/Comments and Answers

Question/Comment: Would you be able to provide a sample budget order for the data bundle?

From: Thomson Reuters

Answer: As deductions, exemptions, and abatements will be added or altered during the actual tax and billing testing sessions and may vary from vendor to vendor, this will have a coresponding effect on the net assessed values for the taxing units. Therefore, a sample of the Department-prescribed budget order document is not available for the data bundle at the current time. However, the essential data that are needed for testing and that would be part of the budget order document can be obtained via the CERTDRATES and ALLCERRATE files, which are provided in the data bundle. On a separate but related note, the Department will provide an example of a roll report that shows the gross assessed values by taxing district. An example of this report will be posted under Frequently Asked Questions of the "50 IAC 26" section on the Phase I Vendor Certification webpage.

Question/Comment: With regards to the columns, starting year and number of years found in the ADJMENTS file, they are noted as fields for data compliance. I have never seen a rejection from the DLGF/LSA regarding these fields unless they have been left blank. I wanted to make sure that the expectations of both agencies is still the same and these values are NOT to proof back to the assessed value for the deduction. Parcels are allowed to have more than one abatement or ERA deduction granted to them and the adjustment amount was always representative of the total abatement or ERA deductions.

From: Thomson Reuters

Answer: The purpose behind the check for the Starting Year and Number of Years fields in the ADJMENTS file is to verify that a valid entry has been entered for the records and that the field has not been left blank, like the vendor has noted. Furthermore, the Department is evaluating its current checks in place, as well as planning to include additional checks in the process, and will be more stringent on checking for this information as part of its data compliance reviews.

Question/Comment: Would it be possible to use a smaller set of data, for example 3 taxing districts from the data bundle.   We feel that there will be a significant amount of wasted time for all involved during the test in importing an entire set of county data and further processing of that data throughout the Phase 1 testing.   It is our opinion that the intention of these tests can be accommodated with a smaller set of data.

From: XSoft

Answer: Per the requirements of 50 IAC 26-3, the property tax management system must be able to import the files

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referenced in 50 IAC 26-20 with a response time that is reasonable in light of current industry standards. Therefore, for Phase I testing, the vendors should expect to work with the entire files in the data set that are pertinent to their systems (e.g., LAND file for CAMA, SALEPARCEL for sales disclosure, etc.). Should the time requirement for importing the files prove to be unduly problematic during the actual testing, the Department evaluators will note this and may consider the option of asking vendors to import a subset of the data bundle files.

| **Question/Comment:** | In reviewing the data bundle, our programmers found that there are certain files provided in the data bundle that do not adhere to the field length requirements the DLGF has established in the file formats. | XSoft |
| **Answer:** | The Department has reviewed the file formats in the data bundle to examine issues raised by the vendors and has corrected any discovered discrepancies. The 50 IAC 26 Testing Data Bundle link under the "50 IAC 26" section on the Phase I Vendor Certification webpage has been updated to include the corrected flat files. | |

| **Question/Comment:** | We are confused by the supplemental Mobile and Personal Property files found at http://www.in.gov/dlfg/7697.htm. We do not see any tests within the Phase 1 Certification Scenarios that have us using these files.   What are we to do with these files? | XSoft |
| **Answer:** | These supplemental files will be used for the Phase II integration testing scenarios as part of the roll of assessment data from the assessment system to the tax and billing system. Based on communications regarding the previous round of certification testing, the tax and billing vendors had to create supplemental files for personal property and mobile home data. The Department has proactively created these two supplemental files for the vendors to use during Phase II certification testing. | |

| **Question/Comment:** | For the Assessment Phase I Test Area 1: Import and Back-Up | XSoft |

of Files, we can create an import routine to import the majority of data in the file formats; however, the file formats don't always contain enough information to create a complete record. Therefore (per your answers to the Rule comments) we will have to fill in the blanks with generic information where necessary. Using generic information to fill in the blanks can cause the resultant data to differ from the data bundle provided. Examples of this include valuation totals being different once imported and calculated. Also, there are certain data elements that are value adjustments (e.g., Fireplace Adj, Rec Room Adj, Loft Value Adj, Plumbing Value Adj) that are calculated in the system based on the type and number of items of each. Since the file formats of some improvements only contain the value as opposed to the type and number of items there is not a realistic way for us to fill in the blanks to accurately reflect these amounts. This is fine by us, but we just wanted to make sure you were aware of the possibility of differences.

Answer:

The Department recognizes that this is a potential outcome. However, the Department anticipates that the vendors will make a good faith effort while auto-filling the data so that potential variances between the data in the system and the records in the data bundle will be minimized. Additionally, the Department evaluators may ask that known variances be explained/highlighted during the actual certification testing.

Question/Comment: For the Assessment Phase I Test Area 1: Import and Back-Up of Files, Test No .2, what is the prior year data used for? Xsoft

Answer:

The intent of importing the prior year data is three-fold. First, the prior year data show the functionality required of the assessment systems to maintain assessment data from previous years. Second, the prior year data will allow for the vendors to demonstrate that the lock guidance functionality is correctly in place, using the assumption that the 2011 pay 2012 data have been certified. Third, the prior year data will allow for the vendors to demonstrate the functionality of generating reports that include multiple years.

Question/Comment: For the Assessment Phase I Test Area 12: Improvement Valuations, as mentioned in Assessment Phase I Test Area 1: Import and Back-Up of Files comments above, any improvements where we had to fill in the blanks due to lack of data in the data bundle may result in different end result values than what the data bundle contains. Xsoft

		From
Answer:	The Department recognizes that this is a potential outcome. However, the Department anticipates that the vendors will make a good faith effort while auto-filling the data so that potential variances between the data in the system and the records in the data bundle will be minimized. Additionally, the Department evaluators may ask that known variances be explained/highlighted during the actual certification testing.	

| **Question/Comment:** | For the Assessment Phase I Test Area 12: Improvement Valuations, It is our understanding that we will come into the Phase 1 Test with a database that utilizes the DLGF supplied 2013 cost tables provided to all counties and assessment vendors for 2013 pay 2014. We will then demonstrate that we can update the 2013 tables with the cost tables (i.e., Revised_Cost_Schedules_for_CAMA_Improvement_Valuation s_Testing_-_COMPLETE_SET.xls) that the DLGF has supplied at http://www.in.gov/dlfg/7697.htm. With regard to the Revised_Cost_Schedules_for_CAMA_Improvement_Valuation s_Testing_-_COMPLETE_SET.xls, we noticed that initially this file only contained four cost tables and now it contains a complete set of cost tables. Are we correct in assuming that the initial four cost tables that originally existed on your website are no longer to be used and that this new complete set of cost tables is to be used? We also noticed that many of the issues that existed with the initial 2013 cost tables (prior to errata) exist in the Revised_Cost_Schedules_for_CAMA_Improvement_Valuation s_Testing_-_COMPLETE_SET.xls. Will similar corrections be made to this file as were made to the initial 2013 cost tables? | Xsoft |

| **Answer:** | The initial Revised Cost Schedules for CAMA Improvement Valuations Testing workbook posted to the Phase I Vendor Certification page did only contain a small subset of the cost schedules; however, this workbook has been updated to contain a more complete set of cost tables, thereby allowing for more options to choose from during actual testing. The assumption is correct that CAMA vendors should have the bona fide 2013 cost schedules, which were provided by the Department in late 2012, loaded in their systems by the time Phase I certification begins in July 2013. This includes the changes that were referenced in the 2013 Cost Schedules Errata memo from December 14, 2012. As part of the Improvement Valuations test area, the CAMA vendors will show the true tax value of various improvements, using the 2013 cost schedule data that were already loaded in their systems prior to certification testing. Vendors, then, will need to demonstrate that they can update the cost schedules with the cost schedule data provided on the Phase I Vendor Certification webpage. Then, the vendors will need to show the updated true tax value of the improvements that were used in the first part of the test area, using the updated cost schedules. The changes referenced in the 2013 Cost Schedule Errata memo from December 14, 2012 are, also, reflected in the cost schedules test workbook posted on the Phase I Vendor Certification webpage. | |

| **Question/Comment:** | For the Data Compliance Fields document, regarding the | Xsoft |

PARCEL file, 1. Property Street Address - There are many parcels (e.g., vacant parcels) that do not have an address. We notice on the file formats there is a comment that states "If no address has been assigned to a vacant lot, identify the full possible address range of the vacant lot". We are unclear what this means. Could you please clarify?

Our concern is that we don't want to force a warning message for users when there is no address since we know that many parcels have no address. One solution would be that we could have the warning message not display when the property class is vacant. This would eliminate unnecessary warning messages for users. 2. Adjustment Factor Applied - We notice on the file formats there is a comment that states "A location cost multiplier... Field should contain a "bottom line" adjustment factor in the event of equalization if applicable." Location Cost Multipliers and Equalization Factors are two different things; we are unclear what this field is to be used for?

Answer:

Regarding Question No. 1 for the Property Street Address, the county assessing officials will need to populate this field with a logical value in the event that the exact street address is not available. For example, if a parcel resides between 50 N Main Street and 70 N Main Street, the county assessing official could populate the field with an address like, "Between 50 N Main Street and 70 N Main Street."   Regarding Question No 2 for the Adjustment Factor Applied, the "bottom line" refers to using the overall factor should the applied adjusment factor represent a combination of a location cost multiplier and an equalization factor.

Question/Comment: For the Data Compliance Fields document, regarding the DWELLING file, 1. Total Bedrooms, Number of Family Rooms, Number of Dining Rooms - We have noticed in many counties that these items are not always captured. We assume that this is because the assessor either cannot get into the house to get an accurate count or that data collectors have not captured the data because historically the DLGF's cost approach does not consider these items when valuing a property. Does having a zero in these fields constitute the field being populated? 2. Garage Capacity, Garage Square Feet - Should we use a zero for these fields if no garage exists?   Xsoft

Answer: Regarding Question No. 1 for the Total Bedrooms, Number of

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Family Rooms, and Number of Dining Rooms, in the event the data are completely unattainable, the county assessing officials should not populate the fields with using zero - unless the assessing officials are reasonably certain a dwelling really has no bedrooms, family rooms, or dining room. The county assessing officials should make a concerted effort to obtain the data for the parcel(s) using the various resources available, but the Department understands that this may not be feasible in all circumstances. Regarding Question No. 2 for Garage Capacity and Garage Square Feet, if a garage does not exist for the dwelling, then, yes, zero is an acceptable entry for these two fields.

Question/Comment:	For the Data Compliance Fields document, regarding the BLDDETL file, 1. Number of Units, Average Unit Size - Not all Commercial / Industrial buildings have these items; is data population required when the improvement is not an apartment, condo, motel or hotel? If the improvement is not an apartment, condo, motel or hotel what should go in this field, blank or zero?	Xsoft
Answer:	The Department has edited the Data Compliance Fields document to reflect that the system is not required to generate a warning, and the corresponding link under the "50 IAC 26" section on the Phase I Vendor Certification webpage has been updated to reflect the edited document. However, the Department would like to emphasize that as part of its data compliance reviews, it will screen the data set for appropriate property class codes or improvement type codes to ensure that applicable properties (i.e., apartments, condos, motels, and hotels) that have this data available have it included as part of the file.	
Question/Comment:	For the Data Compliance Fields document, regarding the SALEPARCEL file, for the data field A5_Street1 - There are many parcels (e.g., vacant parcels) that do not have an address. We notice on the PARCEL file formats there is a comment that states "If no address has been assigned to a vacant lot, identify the full possible address range of the vacant lot". We are unclear what this means. Could you please clarify? Our concern is that we don't want to force a warning message for users when there is no address since we know that many parcels have no address. One solution would be that we could have the warning message not display when the property class is vacant. This would eliminate unnecessary warning messages for users.	Xsoft
Answer:	Regarding the property's street address, the county assessing	

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	officials will need to populate this field with a logical value in the event that the exact street address is not available. For example, if a parcel resides between 50 N Main Street and 70 N Main Street, the county assessing officials could populate the field with an address like, "Between 50 N Main Street and 70 N Main Street."	

Question/Comment:	Abatements are in year 1 of a 10 year abatement, starting in what pay year? Pay 2012 that we calc or pay 2013 that we will be testing on?	L.L. Low Associates
Answer:	Tax and bill system vendors should assume that all abatements are in the first year of a ten year abatement, starting with the 2011 Pay 2012 cycle.	

Question/Comment:	We are assuming that exemptions and deductions will be the same for all pay years (12, 13, 14) as the Exemption/Deduction file does not have a pay year.	L.L. Low Associates
Answer:	Tax and bill system vendors should assume that all exemptions and deductions will *initially* carry over from the 2011 Pay 2012 cycle to the 2012 Pay 2013 cycle. However, as part of the various testing scenarios, the Department evaluators will be asking the vendors to apply or change deductions on different property records. Therefore, it's possible that the deductions may vary in the Pay 2013 and Pay 2014 years compared to the Pay 2012 year.	

Question/Comment:	The Mobile file is not the State format as it is longer than 334 characters.	L.L. Low Associates
Answer:	The Department has reviewed the file formats in the data bundle to examine issues raised by the vendors and has corrected any discovered discrepancies. The 50 IAC 26 Testing Data Bundle link under the "50 IAC 26" section on the Phase I Vendor Certification webpage has been updated to include the corrected flat files.	

Question/Comment:	The Supplemental files do not appear to be the correct format either: • Persprop Suplmntl is 488 characters and should be 477 • Mobile Suplmntl is 454 characters and should be 250	L.L. Low Associates
Answer:	The Department has reviewed the file formats in the data bundle to examine issues raised by the vendors and has corrected any discovered discrepancies. The 50 IAC 26 Testing Data Bundle link under the "50 IAC 26" section on the Phase I Vendor Certification webpage has been updated to include the corrected flat files.	

Question/Comment:	We found a problem with the CERTDRATES and ALLCERRATE	Thomson Reuters

files. The data provided isn't the same length as the field and the layout description.   Below is the layout of the CERTDRATES and a chunk of the file. The problem starts at column 4. The county unit is usually on the budget orders as 0000 (4 zeros). In the file, it's only 0. The description of the field says "4 digit taxing unit code as provided in county budget order" so we would expect it to be 4 characters.

Same with fund code. Normally 0101 but the file shows just 101.

Same with the tax set code. In this case the description says it MUST be 3 digits, but the file only has 1.

With regards to the ALLCERRATE files they are also missing lead zeros as prescribed by your format.

| Answer: | The Department has reviewed the file formats in the data bundle to examine issues raised by the vendors and has corrected any discovered discrepancies. The 50 IAC 26 Testing Data Bundle link under the "50 IAC 26" section on the Phase I Vendor Certification webpage has been updated to include the corrected flat files. | |

| Question/Comment: | For the "List of deductions and exemptions to apply to property records" document on the Phase I Vendor Certification webpage, vendors should use the value of $15,000 for an adjustment amount for those property records with an adjustment code of 13 - Solar Energy Systems/Wind Power Devices. | DLGF |

| Question/Comment: | In the December 6, 2012 Department-issued memo to tax and billing vendors, there are three personal property records listed as being delinquent for Pay 12 tax liability. They are as follows:

901010201204
901010302000
901030200601

When reviewing the records contained in the Department-provided data bundle for certification testing, these three records do not appear to be included in the PERSPROP text files. Please advise. | DLGF

Added March 25, 2013 |
| Answer: | There were several additional adjustments made to the | |

personal property data set between the initial draft of the December 6, 2012 memo and the release of the data bundle. These adjustments were not reflected in the final draft of the Department-issued memo to the tax and billing vendors. For Phase I testing purposes, tax and billing vendors should treat the following personal property records in the data bundle as being delinquent for Pay 12 tax liability:

901205006993
901205107789
901225006390

Please note that the real property records listed in the memo remain the same; only the three personal property records have been changed. Additionally, tax and billing vendors should assume that these three records are fully delinquent (i.e., no payment has been made) for the Pay 12 tax liability.

Question/Comment:

In our testing of the import of the real property data, an issue has come up with a particular record. In position 51 of the BLDDETL file, the Floor Number field is used to define on which level the use should be placed, and subsequently which rate should be used for that use, as per the Department-provided cost schedules for real property improvements.

For Parcel No. 900809100027000004, we have a single use in the basement (Floor 000) that is Industrial Office. Per the Guideline, there is no Industrial Office improvement use type in the basement.

What is the Department's expecations, and how would you like this to be imported? As we code to the Guideline, we do not, at this time, have an improvement use type code for Industrial Office lower than level 001.

Thomson Reuters

Added August 1, 2013

Answer:

For the particular parcel referenced in the question above, looking at the property class code associated with this particular record (PCC 350 – Industrial Warehouse), it would seem that any of the following would be an appropriate improvement use type code to select: Light Utility Storage, Heavy Utility Storage, Light Manufacturing, or Heavy Manufacturing.

Generally speaking, the Department is mindful of the potential for similar issues arising when CAMA vendors are importing the data from the real property files contained in the 50 IAC 26 testing data bundle and establishing the parcel records in the CAMA system. In the instances where a discrepancy does indeed exist, the Department will grant a level of discretion to CAMA vendors to select an improvement use type code – or whatever data field in which the discrepancy may exist - that is overall appropriate with the parcel's characteristics (e.g., looking at the property class

discrepancy may exist – that is overall appropriate with the parcel's characteristics (e.g., looking at the property class code for the parcel to help determine what would be an applicable improvement use type code). The Department realizes that by changing one improvement use type code for one improvement on a property record, this one change can affect the overall total improvement AV for that record. Differences in certain values between what are reflected in the real property files in the data bundle and what are shown in the CAMA system will not necessarily result in a vendor being deemed "non-compliant" with the testing scenarios, assuming the vendor can correctly demonstrate to the Department evaluators how their system's value was derived. As referenced in previous guidance provided by the Department, the testing evaluators may ask any differences that exist between the data bundle files and the values reflected in the vendor's system be explained as part of the certification testing process. As such, the Department suggests that any changes that CAMA vendors have made to any of the data – like changing improvement use type code – be documented.

Question/Comment: Is there a set of Sales Disclosure Files for 12 pay 13 that match the parcel file for 12 pay 13? The data bundle I have only has 11 pay 12. Shouldn't these files match for 11 pay 12 as well?

We ask because one of our programmers sent the following regarding pulling in emails from the SDF files:

"The documentation says, '… must match a valid Parcel Number in the PARCEL file for the assessment year.' I found the first parcel number in the list below in the PARCEL12P13.txt file, but not in the PARCEL11P12.txt file. Since the Sale Parcel file is labeled 11P12, I expected all of the properties to be in the PARCEL11P12.txt file."

L.L. Low Associates

Added August 1, 2013

Answer: The sales disclosure files provided in the 50 IAC 26 testing data bundle include records with a conveyance date that cover the period of January 1, 2011 to February 29, 2012. The county assessor would have used these sales records to conduct a ratio study in order to derive trending factors that would have been applied to the AVs of the real property records with an assessment date of March 1, 2012 (12 Pay 13 PARCEL file). Generally speaking, these records should contain parcel numbers that tie back to the parcel numbers in the 2011 Pay 2012 PARCEL file. However, it is possible for discrepancies to exist in the parcel number between the SALEPARCEL and PARCEL files due to a couple of reasons.

One possible reason is the potential for a data entry error while entering the parcel number in the sales disclosure system, thereby leading to a discrepancy between a parcel number reflected in the SALEPARCEL file and the PARCEL file. Another possible reason is due to the timing lag of when the data are entered in the sales disclosure system compared to the CAMA system for transactions involving combinations or splits. Specific to trying to match the parcel number in the SALEPARCEL file back to the 11 Pay 12 PARCEL file in the data bundle, the 11 Pay 12 PARCEL file was generated in early August 2011. If there were any sales that involved combinations or splits of parcels and new parcel numbers being created, the SALEPARCEL file may reflect a parcel number that would not have not been entered in the CAMA system yet by the time the 11 Pay 12 PARCEL file was generated – even if the conveyance date and date received occurred before the date the 11 Pay 12 PARCEL was generated. As the Department became keenly aware during the formulation of the Phase II testing scenarios, the data entry flow process, as well as the time involved to complete the full process, for a sales disclosure form can vary from county to county.

For certification testing purposes, tax and billing vendors will only need to focus on those records from the sale disclosure files in the data bundle that are marked with a "Y" for indicating that the taxpayer would like to receive their tax statement electronically (Test Area 23). In the event that there is a parcel number listed for a sales disclosure record where a taxpayer is indicating they want to receive their tax statement electronically and that record does not correspond to a parcel number in the 2012 Pay 2013 PARCEL file, the tax and billing vendor will not have to include that taxpayer on the requested report from Test Area 23.